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ABSTRACT

This position paper raises concerns, states positions, and makes recommendations about the way in which adult education and career education relate and coexist. The concept of career-oriented education for adults is supported, but concern over program direction prompted statements of position relating to career education research, curricula emphasis, agency articulation, alternative school models, teacher-counselor-administrator models, materials and tests, and evaluation and accountability techniques. (CL)

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NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ADULT EDUCATION

# CAREER EDUCATION

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# THE PROBLEM

Education reform presently underway through the U.S. Office of Education seeks to establish a new relationship between education and work—not just preparation for low skill work or for the limited number of top professional posts, but education for all types of work. Known as "career education" the reform movement has special implications for adult education and all involved in any way with its direction and purpose.

The U.S. Office of Education is presently formulating the necessary foundations for various models in career education. Once again, it appears that a disproportionate amount of time, effort, and financing will be spent on a K-12 program for youth with "too little and too late" a planning phase for the adult citizen. The adult who is presently employed, facing unemployment or underemployment, needs specific educational programs which provide career advancement, and career entry and exit at any level at any time.

Career education should reform the entire education process on the basis of people learning throughout their lives at times when learning best takes place. Lifelong learning, as opposed to extended schooling which ends at a point in an adult's life, is a reality of our service occupation-oriented society. To accurately reflect this reality, career education must adopt a lifelong learning approach based on problem solving.

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# CAREER RENEWAL FOR ADULTS THROUGH EDUCATION

## A POSITION PAPER FROM THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ADULT EDUCATION

May 1972

America is a Credentialed Society! Certificates, licenses, and diplomas seem to be passports in the society. Those who hold these credentials often enjoy the good life and all it suggests--stimulating work, material gains, and social status. Those without credentials may face closed doors and are cut off from life's rewards, satisfactions, and achievements.

Approximately 70 million adults face life without the credentials of the high school diploma. Countless others desperately need licenses to obtain jobs and upgrade job skills. Diplomas which once guaranteed employment to engineers and teachers become worthless to their holders as job demands shift and new careers must replace old. Continually adding to the flow of adults needing education for careers is the pool of 850,000 students who drop out of secondary school each year.

Adult education has traditionally been active in preparing adults to enter the Credentialed Society. Basic skills courses, high school programs, and job skill classes have helped provide adults with the skills to get and keep jobs and to live happy, productive lives. Remedial and retraining efforts have shaped the adult education approach in the past.

Education reform presently underway in the U.S. Office of Education seeks to establish a new relationship between education and work. Not just preparation for low-skill work or for the limited number of top professional posts, but education for all types of work. Known as "Career Education," the reform movement has special implications for adult education and all involved in any way with its direction and purpose.

Feeling a responsibility to adult education students and teachers and feeling also a need to respond to progressive education reform, the National Advisory Council on Adult Education prepared this position paper as a working draft which needs review and revision as the career education concept takes shape. The paper raises concerns, states positions, and makes recommendations about the way in which adult education and career education relate and coexist.

The Council calls these recommendations,in draft form, to the attention of U.S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney P. Marland, Jr. It is our considered hope that by combining the efforts of many groups we may develop meaningful career education implications in the long-respected field of adult education.

As envisioned by Commissioner of Education Marland, "Career education is for all students from kindergarten through 12th grade and beyond; whether they enter the job market immediately after high school, after college, or whether as adults they return to school." It is with the adult group, with those returning to school for remedial or renewal education, that the National Advisory Council on Adult Education is concerned.

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In the opinion of the Council, career education research has concentrated on the traditional K-12 structure without adequately considering the adult in the research models. Eight in every ten jobs in America can be entered with a high school diploma or with other nondegree post-secondary training. Adult education is the only public agency in the country having the capacity to help an individual earn a high school diploma or its equivalent after the individual leaves school.

POSITION: It is the Council's position that adults have diverse career needs and they can benefit from an adult education focus. The diversity of adults to be served

ranges from the illiterate to the professional and includes the dropout, the handicapped, the employed, the unemployed, and the underemployed.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council recommends that career education research models be modified or developed to reflect the diverse needs of adults. Specific opportunities must provide for career education entry and exit at any level. The present emphasis on age limits, sequential curricula, and prescribed entry tends to limit adult opportunities in career education. The Council further recommends that adult education representatives immediately develop career education models to more fairly reflect the diverse needs of adults.

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Realigning the curriculum from the American high school is one of career education's major objectives. Though it is a worthy goal to make knowledge more relevant, more

immediate, and more applicable to life, this reform is but a part of a larger reform.

By 1985, it is estimated adults will change careers - not jobs but career fields - three to five times in their working lives. Education, especially career-oriented education, is a lifelong process. Career education must reform the entire education process on the basis of people learning throughout their lives at times when learning best takes place.

POSITION: The Council believes that lifelong learning, as opposed to extended schooling which ends at a point in an adult's life, should become a reality in our society. To accurately reflect this reality, career education must adopt a lifelong learning approach based on problem-solving.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council recommends that career education reforms concentrate on a broad base which emphasizes knowledge and skill. With a knowledge base, an adult can learn and unlearn quickly, move from career field to career field easily.

In a skills base, the adult becomes obsolete when his job is terminated. Cost factors, time considerations, and accountability trends make a knowledge base mandatory in preparing adults in both remedial and career renewal areas.

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Another goal of career education is a realistic understanding of the relationship between work and education. The adult learner, whether in need of remedial or renewal opportunities, often has had some work experiences. The 15 USOE cluster areas of career education, grouping occupations into similar categories, will have a different meaning for adults with work experiences than they will have for students who have never worked.

Career education seeks to capitalize on career attitudes which develop early in the young and modify over time. For adults, work attitudes develop on a different continuum. Adults seeking career education will bring higher levels of frustration and insight regarding work than will their junior counterparts. Adults to be served include those who want to improve their capability on present jobs, those

not presently achieving satisfaction on jobs, and those with no jobs at all.

POSITION: It is the Council's position that career education must provide the adult with the mental and manual skills necessary to perform effectively on the job. In addition, adults must develop positive attitudes about work, school, and society to help them experience success in these areas.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council recommends that the highest flexibility possible be built into the cluster concept of career education. Cognitive and affective skills of adult and children differ regarding education for job preparation, procurement, and retention. The Council further recommends development of a career education curriculum for adults which reflects differing cognitive and affective education needs.

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One of the major goals of career education is articulation among all involved in education at all grades and levels. Adult needs for education have been met in the past by a variety of agencies and groups. Vocational education, manpower education, vocational rehabilitation, and adult education have all had an interest in the adult learner based on specific education needs.

Regardless of which group has the longest experience with adults, the major concern of all groups should be coordination of effort, reduction of duplication, and improvement of adult learning opportunities. The returning G.I., the high school dropout, the prisoner, the aging American, the employed, the unemployed, the welfare mother -- all are adults in need of some form of career education. Their needs should not be sacrificed to the ego flights and power struggles of groups serving the diverse needs of adults.

POSITION: It is the Council's position that the adult learner suffers when those agencies and institutions serving the adult fail to coordinate their services. Articulation is vital among all segments and levels of education serving the adult. These levels include

elementary and secondary schools, vocational-technical schools, junior and community colleges, and all of higher education. There must be articulation also among all agencies of a community serving the adult, including welfare, labor, health, and education agencies.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council calls on career education planners to recognize that adult education has primary responsibility for reaching all people beyond the regular school age not currently enrolled in high school or in college. The Council recommends that career education planners devise an effective means of coordinating the efforts of all education groups and agencies having adult emphasis and that adult educators accept the challenge of a coordinating plan.

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In light of career education's challenge to the general curriculum, serious questions are being raised as to what constitutes a high school education and high school equivalency. Much of what is called a high school education is not related at all to occupational proficiency. The career education concept is opening classroom doors, extending the classroom into the community, expanding the school day and extending the school year.

Adult education has long supported the widened-horizon concept of education. As an original predecessor of the "University Without Walls" concept, adult education has used the community as the classroom, taken classes to adults when they could not travel, and used school buildings for adult needs.

The community school, providing a learning environment for adults and children alike, is an ideal career education tool. The senior citizen, the unemployed-underemployed-employed adult, families in need of group activity, and all those in need of renewal through education can benefit from the school facility being open 16 hours a day the year round.

POSITION: The Council's position is that a community school concept is an ideal learning environment for adults as well

as children. Reforms in high school education and high school equivalency for adults in career education can be adapted into the extended day, expanded year concept of a community school.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the Council's recommendation that career education planners develop a community school model for career-oriented adult education. This model could provide flexible opportunities for adult entry and exit at all education levels in a variety of remedial, renewal, and redevelopment needs. The Council further recommends that adult education representatives initiate the model planning groups for full utilization of educational facilities.

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Teachers of adults have traditionally found themselves in one of three groups--lay leaders instructing adults in a variety of community settings; people whose adult education service is part of a regular job or who accept

supplemental employment in adult education; and full time specialists in the field.

In recent years, much emphasis has been placed on providing education experiences for teachers of basic skills for adults. These experiences differ from those of elementary and secondary school teachers. Since most adult education teachers begin their training with an elementary or secondary emphasis, an adult education emphasis should be a significant part of their professional development. But the emphasis had not included the career education orientation which is currently being supported by the U.S. Office of Education. Such an orientation, though very appropriate to adult education, is just emerging. <u>The subject matter and humanistic aspects of career education for adults and their teachers are yet to formally emerge in a teacher training format</u>.

POSITION: The Council's position is that there is a need to provide an entirely new scheme for preparing teachers and counselors of adults in a career education framework. University and in-service preparation of these teachers and counselors should prepare them to

meet the cognitive and affective needs of adults in remedial, renewal, and redevelopment areas of work.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council recommends that a teacher-counselor-administrator training model with career education emphasis be developed. The national staff development plan under section 309 (c) of the adult education act should contain career education components in staff training. Appropriate university, school, community, and work experiences should be included in the model. A substantive vacuum will exist until such a training model is developed and until such teachers-counselors-administrators are actively involved in the adult education-career education scheme.

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Tests and materials used in adult education with a career education emphasis are of great concern. The concept of a "Sesame Street" approach for adults on <u>educational</u>

television might offer an effective learning device. Programing proposed in the ALPS/STRIVE effort of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has merit. Other learning devices include written ancillary materials, counseling and tutoring services, new technologies of multi-media, individual instruction, remedial work, language laboratory experiences, cable television, and cassettes.

Standardized tests for adults related to cognitive and affective skills could be of much use to adult educators and employers. One such test, the Adult Performance Level, is being field tested by the U.S. Office of Education now. This test, will result in the first definition of necessary adult performance levels and suggest adult learning experiences having no reference to grade levels.

POSITION: The Council's position is that materials of a problem-solving nature, devoid of grade level reference, are needed in adult career education. Tests encompassing both cognitive and affective skills are necessary for accurate evaluation of a career based curriculum for adults.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council recommends the development

and use of materials and standardized tests which provide the best information to adult teachers, counselors, administrators, employers, and the student to enrich the learning environment.

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Career education needs of adults will differ among the 50 states. Geography, population composition, job availability, family mobility, and socio-economic conditions will all contribute to career goals and employment needs of a state's residents. Since those at the state level, in concert with local agencies, are the ones who will philosophically decide and implement what they want for their citizens, it is natural to look to the individual states to plan the career education needs of their citizens.

POSITION: It is the Council's position that state plans are a vital means of providing effective career education programs for adults related to the needs of individuals in each state. Adult educators should be involved in providing leader-

ship for activating and reviewing these plans as the guidelines are developed by the USOE.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the Council's recommendation that an annual state plan for adult career education be presented and reviewed before adult education appropriations are allotted to the states. Evidence of advisory group involvement, agency coordination, and attempts to reduce program duplication should be required as part of each adult education state plan. Further evidence should be required for identifying ways in which agencies carry out and evaluate their adult career education services.

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Accountability is a vital concern for those involved in adult career education. The success of each adult education program is to be measured by the success of each adult in achieving his career goal. Percentages are not applicable here. Generally, financial accountability is stressed rather

than long-range accountability.

POSITION: The Council supports the concept of financial and program accountability in adult career education programs. In measuring the success of each adult after career-oriented education, the Council supports the concept of meaningful employment as the measure of the program's success.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council recommends that fiscal accountability and program justification be made a part of adult career education evaluation techniques. Employment whether it be new or upgraded should be made available to all adults successfully completing programs.

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The National Advisory Council on Adult Education supports the concept of career-oriented education for adults. The Council's concern over program direction prompted the statements of position relating to career education research, curricula emphasis, agency articulation, alternative school models, teacher-counselor-administrator models, materials and tests, and evaluation and accountability techniques.

By adding its voice to the many already joined in developing career education direction, the Council hopes to ensure inclusion of countless numbers of adults who will benefit from adult education with a career education approach.

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